

Supervisor Romaine and Suffolk County Sheriff DeMarco Join Forces to Help Families Combat Drug Abuse with Free Drug Testing Kits

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Pictured left to right are Town Youth Bureau Board Member Phil Enright, Deputy Supervisor Dan Panico, Suffolk Sheriff Vincent DeMarco, Supervisor Ed Romaine, Councilwoman Jane Bonner and Dr. Jeffery Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

Farmingville, NY - At an April 2 Town Hall press conference, Supervisor Ed Romaine and Suffolk County Sheriff Vincent DeMarco announced that the Town has joined forces with the Sheriff's Department to help families fight against drug abuse with a free drug testing kit program. "Test Don't Guess" assists parents or guardians who are concerned that their minor children may be using illegal substances and provides an important tool to engage in the critical conversations about drug use. It also offers parents a method to be reassured of their judgment and seek professional help, and take the first step towards emotional and physical healing for a drug-using teen. The free drug testing program will be administered by the Town's Youth Bureau. Also at the press conference were Deputy Supervisor Dan Panico, Councilwoman Jane Bonner, Dr. Jeffery Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and Youth Bureau Board Member Phil Enright.

"Drug abuse by a child can devastate a family and lead to many problems including criminal behavior and jail time," said Supervisor Romaine. "It's important that parents communicate with their children, know the signs and take early action to stop drug abuse before it's too late. I thank Sheriff DeMarco for bringing this program to the Town and I urge parents, who suspect their child is abusing drugs, to call our Youth Bureau today and get a free drug testing kit."

Sheriff DeMarco said, "I want to thank Supervisor Romaine for encouraging Brookhaven's parents to use "Test Don't Guess" drug testing kits to test their kids for drug use. Working together, I think we can empower more parents by making the kits available at the Town Youth Bureau and encourage families to talk about how even casual drug use can quickly lead to dangerous addictions."

"The availability of drugs and problems that they create in our communities is a real concern that must be addressed at all levels of government," commented Brookhaven Town Deputy Supervisor/Councilman Dan Panico. "I thank the Sheriff for making these kits available to the parents in our communities."

Dr. Reynolds said, "In the midst of an historic opiate epidemic, families need every available resource to both prevent and detect substance abuse among teens. Substance abuse is 100% preventable and addiction is treatable,

especially when detected early. I thank Supervisor Ed Romaine and Sheriff Vincent DeMarco for recognizing the continued crisis in our communities and giving parents in the Town of Brookhaven the tools they need to keep their kids safe."

Councilman Tim Mazzei said, "Drug abuse is a problem that must be addressed with children at an early age. I commend Sheriff DeMarco for establishing the 'Test Don't Guess' program and working with the Town to help our residents in need." Councilwoman Jane Bonner said, "When a family is faced with a child who may be abusing drugs, they need to address it right away. This program provides parents with the opportunity to take action early and get the right professional help that can save a child's life."

To find out more about the "Test Don't Guess" program, go to www.brookhaven.org. To pick up a drug testing kit (limit 2 per family), please call the Town of Brookhaven Call Center at 451-TOWN(8696).

In addition to the "Test Don't Guess" program, Deputy Supervisor Panico announced that he is co-sponsoring two other events with the Sheriff's Department in his Council District. The first is on April 10 at the Manorville Fire Department Headquarters and the other is on April 24 at the Mastic Fire Department Headquarters. Both events start at 6:00 p.m. and will include availability of free home drug testing kits, a Heroin Awareness Presentation by the Sheriff's Department, and "Shed the Meds," a program that gives residents the ability to safely dispose of expired and unneeded prescription drugs, hypodermic needles and syringes so they do not fall into the hands of children. For more information about these events, call 631-451-6502 or e-mail CouncilmanPanico@brookhaven.org .

Councilwoman Bonner will also sponsor a "Shed the Meds" event with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department on Saturday, April 6 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Rose Caracappa Senior Center located at 739 Route 25A in Mount Sinai. Drug Testing kits will be available at the event.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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